

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFLECTION-BASED ACADEMIC SUPERVISION IN ENHANCING TEACHERS' PROFESIONALISM AT AN INDONESIAN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision in enhancing teachers' professionalism at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the supervision process and its impact on teachers' professional development. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving the principal and teachers. The findings reveal that reflection-based academic supervision was implemented through systematic stages, including supervision planning, classroom observation, reflective dialogue, and follow-up coaching. Reflective supervision encouraged teachers to critically evaluate their teaching practices, improve instructional planning, and strengthen pedagogical competence. The study also identified several challenges, such as time constraints, teachers' readiness for self-reflection, and limited follow-up programs. Nevertheless, reflective supervision contributed positively to fostering teachers' professional awareness, openness to feedback, and commitment to continuous improvement. This study concludes that reflection-based academic supervision is an effective strategy for enhancing teacher professionalism when implemented collaboratively and sustainably within a supportive school culture.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Teachers are a central component of the educational process and play a strategic role in improving the quality of learning in schools. According to Mulyasa (2022), professional teachers are those who possess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies in an integrated manner and are able to apply these competencies

effectively in the teaching–learning process. Teacher professionalism strongly determines the quality of students’ learning outcomes, as teachers function not only as facilitators but also as motivators and innovators in classroom practice. Nevertheless, empirical conditions indicate that teacher professionalism still faces various challenges, including limited self-reflection on instructional practices.

Based on preliminary observations at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency, it was found that some teachers have not fully implemented student-centered learning, demonstrate limited engagement in instructional reflection, and show inconsistency in developing innovative teaching materials. These conditions indicate that teachers require continuous professional support to enhance their professionalism. Previous studies have shown that the systematic implementation of academic supervision contributes significantly to improving teacher professionalism, particularly in lesson planning, classroom management, and reflective teaching practices (Wasitoh & Wahyudin, 2023). This finding is further supported by Nurhadi et al. (2025), who emphasized the strategic role of academic supervision in enhancing teacher professionalism across various school contexts.

One strategic effort to improve teacher professionalism is through academic supervision. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2018, pp. 8–10) define academic supervision as a process of professional assistance provided by principals or supervisors to help teachers improve their instructional abilities in order to enhance the quality of learning. Academic supervision is not merely an administrative evaluation; rather, it is a dialogical, reflective, and collaborative developmental process. Empirical evidence indicates that academic supervision involving reflective sessions and constructive feedback is effective in enhancing teachers’ pedagogical and professional competencies (Faiqoh et al., 2025).

However, in practice, the implementation of academic supervision in many schools tends to be formalistic and emphasizes administrative assessment. Purwanti (2021) notes that overly bureaucratic supervisory practices often make teachers feel monitored rather than guided, resulting in supervision that fails to optimally improve teacher performance and professionalism. In fact, the essence of supervision lies in providing feedback and reflective space for teachers to improve their instructional practices. In line with this view, Oktaviani et al. (2022) argue that effective academic supervision must be conducted continuously and should not be limited to administrative procedures if it is to have a meaningful impact on teacher professionalism.

In this context, a reflection-based academic supervision approach becomes highly relevant. Suphasri and Chinokul (2021) assert that reflection is at the core of teacher professional development, as it enables teachers to learn from their own experiences, recognize instructional shortcomings, and develop new strategies for improving learning. Similarly, Kharlay, Wei, and Philips (2022) emphasize that reflective teachers possess critical awareness of their classroom actions and are capable of independently evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching. Research by Ridiyawati et al. (2025) demonstrates that reflective supervision based on an observation–reflection–follow-up cycle significantly enhances teachers’ professional competence through post-observation reflective discussions.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022), through the Merdeka Curriculum policy, emphasizes the importance of teachers as reflective learners who continuously develop their professional capacity based on teaching experiences. This policy aligns with the spirit of *Merdeka Belajar*, which encourages teachers to engage in continuous reflection to improve instructional practices in accordance with students’ needs. Other studies also indicate that academic supervision plays a crucial role in creating supportive working conditions that foster teacher professionalism in various school contexts (Nurhadi et al., 2025).

Therefore, the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision at SD Negeri Batusari 5 is important to examine. This approach does not merely focus on supervision as control, but rather on empowering teachers to develop self-awareness in enhancing their professionalism. Through constructive reflection and continuous mentoring, teachers are expected to improve the quality of lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation.

Accordingly, this study entitled “*The Implementation of Reflection-Based Academic Supervision in Improving Teacher Professionalism at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency*” aims to describe how reflection-based academic supervision is implemented, to identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and to examine its contribution to improving teacher professionalism in the school context.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing reflection-based academic supervision in improving teacher professionalism. Qualitative research allows researchers to examine phenomena in their natural settings and to understand the meanings, processes, and dynamics that occur in academic supervision practices within the school context. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research is a method used to investigate natural conditions, with the researcher serving as the key instrument, data collection conducted through triangulation techniques, inductive data analysis, and findings that emphasize meaning rather than generalization. A descriptive qualitative design was chosen because this study seeks to describe phenomena factually, systematically, and contextually without manipulating the variables under investigation (Moleong, 2021).

The study was conducted at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency. The selection of this research site was based on the consideration that the school has implemented academic supervision that integrates reflective elements in teacher development. The research was carried out over a three-month period, from February to April 2024. The research was carried out during the even semester of the ongoing academic year, adjusted to the schedule of academic supervision activities and teaching–learning processes at the school.

The research design followed the stages of qualitative inquiry, including: (1) the preparation stage, which involved formulating the research focus, developing interview guidelines, and obtaining research permits; (2) the data collection stage through interviews, observations, and document review; (3) the data analysis stage conducted simultaneously during and after data collection; and (4) the conclusion-drawing stage and the preparation of the research report. These stages were carried out flexibly and iteratively in accordance with the dynamics of field data, as is characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research participants consisted of the principal and teachers of SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that they possessed relevant knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision. The principal was selected as the key informant due to their primary role in planning and implementing academic supervision, while teachers served as supporting informants to provide data on their experiences and the impact of supervision on their professionalism.

In this qualitative study, the researcher acted as the primary research instrument. In addition, supporting instruments were employed, including semi-structured interview guidelines, observation checklists, and documentation guides. These instruments were used to assist the researcher in collecting data systematically and in alignment with the research focus (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data were collected using three main techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore information related to the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision and its impact on teacher professionalism. Observations were carried out to directly examine the supervision process and teachers' instructional practices. Documentation was used to review supporting documents, such as supervision programs, instructional plans, and supervision follow-up reports. The use of multiple data collection techniques aimed to obtain comprehensive and complementary data (Patton, 2015).

Data trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation techniques. The triangulation employed included source triangulation and technique triangulation, by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This approach was used to enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Moleong, 2021). In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the data with participants to ensure consistency between the collected data and actual field conditions.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships among the data. Conclusions were drawn inductively and continuously throughout the research process until stable and consistent findings were obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Implementation of Reflection-Based Academic Supervision by the Principal

The findings indicate that the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen Subdistrict, Demak Regency, was carried out in a planned and systematic manner. Based on interviews with the principal and a review of supervision documents, the supervision activities began with the preparation of a supervision schedule, the selection of teachers and classes to be supervised, and the preparation of classroom observation instruments. The supervision schedule was arranged at the beginning of the semester and communicated to teachers to ensure that it did not disrupt the teaching and learning process.

Supervision was conducted through direct classroom observation while teachers were implementing instruction. The principal observed the learning process from the introductory, core, to the closing activities using the prepared observation instruments. The observations focused on lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, the use of instructional media, and student engagement.

Following classroom observation, the principal conducted reflective discussions with the teachers. These discussions were dialogical and open, allowing teachers to share their teaching experiences, feelings during instruction, and evaluations of the learning activities conducted. The final stage of supervision involved follow-up actions in the form of suggestions for improvement and continued mentoring according to teachers' needs.

Teachers' Reflective Process After Instruction

The findings show that instructional reflection was carried out by teachers as part of the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision. Reflection was conducted after classroom observation through discussions between teachers and the principal. At this stage, teachers were asked to review the learning activities they had implemented, including the achievement of learning objectives, student engagement, and the effectiveness of the methods and media used.

Based on interviews with teachers, reflection involved identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction, challenges encountered during the teaching process, and factors influencing learning success. Teachers also expressed their personal feelings and experiences during instruction, including students' responses to the learning activities.

Observations and document analysis revealed that instructional reflection was also documented in the form of reflective notes and revisions to instructional tools. Teachers revised teaching modules, lesson plans (RPP), and instructional strategies based on the results of reflection and feedback from the principal. Reflection was conducted continuously as part of efforts to improve the quality of learning.

Obstacles in Implementing Reflection-Based Academic Supervision

Based on observations, interviews, and document analysis, several obstacles were identified in the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision at SD Negeri Batusari 5.

First, limited time emerged as the primary constraint. The principal has extensive managerial and administrative responsibilities, which limits the time available for conducting in-depth supervision and reflective discussions. As a result, not all teachers could be optimally supervised within a single period.

Second, teachers' readiness and ability to engage in self-reflection varied. Some teachers were not yet accustomed to conducting critical and in-depth reflection on their own instructional practices, causing the reflection process to remain descriptive rather than fully analytical.

Third, teachers' perceptions of supervision posed a challenge. Some teachers still viewed supervision as a performance evaluation activity, which initially made them less open in expressing weaknesses and difficulties encountered.

Fourth, limitations were found in follow-up actions based on reflection results. Although reflection had been conducted, not all outcomes were followed up through structured coaching or training programs due to time and resource constraints.

Impact of Reflection-Based Academic Supervision on Teacher Professionalism

The findings indicate that the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision had a positive impact on teacher professionalism at SD Negeri Batusari 5. These impacts were evident in several aspects.

First, teachers' reflective awareness increased. Teachers became more capable of recognizing strengths and weaknesses in their instructional practices and were more open to self-evaluation.

Second, improvements were observed in the quality of lesson planning and instructional implementation. Teachers showed progress in developing instructional tools, selecting teaching methods, and using more varied and contextual learning media.

Third, teachers' pedagogical competence improved, particularly in classroom management, interaction with students, and the application of more active learning strategies.

Fourth, a more professional attitude toward feedback and guidance was developed. Teachers no longer perceived supervision as a threatening activity but rather as a mentoring process for professional development.

Fifth, teachers demonstrated increased responsibility and professional commitment in carrying out instructional tasks consistently and sustainably.

Summary of Research Findings on Reflection-Based Academic Supervision

The following summarizes the research findings based on triangulation of data sources obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings

Fokus	Interview Data	Observation Data	Dokumen Data	Triangulasi finding
Planning of reflection-based academic supervision	The principal stated that supervision is planned at the beginning of each semester through scheduling and selecting target teachers.	Supervision schedules and observation instruments were available and documented.	Supervision schedules and observation instruments were available and documented.	Reflection-based academic supervision was implemented in a planned and scheduled manner.
Classroom supervision implementation	Teachers reported that supervision was conducted through direct observation during instruction.	The principal was present in the classroom observing the learning process using observation	Classroom observation sheets were completed.	Supervision was conducted directly and systematically during the instructional process.
Post-observation reflection process	Teachers reported reflective discussions after instruction to evaluate strengths and weaknesses.	Two-way discussions between the principal and teachers were observed after supervision.	Reflective notes and discussion minutes were available	Instructional reflection was conducted dialogically and collaboratively.
Follow-up of supervision results	The principal reported providing suggestions for improvement and continued mentoring.	Improvements in teaching strategies were observed in subsequent supervision sessions.	Revisions to lesson plans and teaching modules were documented after supervision.	Reflection results were followed up through instructional improvements.
Teachers' reflective awareness	Teachers acknowledged being	Teachers were more open to feedback	Teachers were more open to feedback	Reflection-based supervision

Fokus	Interview Data	Observation Data	Dokumen Data	Triangulasi finding
	better able to assess their instructional strengths and weaknesses.	and actively engaged in discussions.	and actively engaged in discussions.	enhanced teachers' reflective awareness.
Improvement in teacher professionalism	Teachers stated that supervision helped improve teaching quality.	Instruction became more structured and student-centered.	Instructional tooRls became more complete and contextual.	Reflection-based academic supervision had a positive impact on teacher professionalism.
Obstacles in supervision implementation	Reflective discussions were sometimes brief.	Reflective discussions were sometimes brief	Not all reflection results were documented	Major obstacles included limited time, teachers' readiness for reflection, and follow-up actions.

Discussion

Reflection-Based Academic Supervision as a Strategy for Enhancing Teacher Professionalism

The findings indicate that the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision at SD Negeri Batusari 5 was carried out through systematic stages, including planning, classroom observation, reflective discussion, and follow-up coaching. This pattern aligns with the concept of modern academic supervision, which emphasizes the role of the supervisor as a facilitator of teachers' professional learning rather than merely an administrative evaluator (Glickman et al., 2018). Previous studies have also confirmed that well-planned, learning-oriented supervision has a significant impact on improving teacher professionalism (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

The results of this study reinforce the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who argue that teacher professional development is more effective when grounded in reflection on authentic classroom practice. Through post-observation reflection, teachers not only receive feedback but also develop critical awareness of their own instructional practices, as emphasized in Schön's (1983) work and further elaborated by Loughran (2002).

Reflective discussions conducted between the principal and teachers after supervision were shown to encourage teachers' openness to feedback and instructional change. This finding is consistent with the study by Suphasri and Chinokul (2021), which demonstrated that collaborative reflection enhances teachers' pedagogical capacity on an ongoing basis. In addition, Timperley et al. (2007) highlighted that reflective dialogue grounded in evidence of student learning is a key factor in the effectiveness of academic supervision.

Teacher Reflection and the Strengthening of Professional Competence

The increase in teachers' reflective awareness identified in this study indicates that reflection-based academic supervision directly contributes to the strengthening of teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies. Teachers became more systematic in lesson planning, more adaptive in instructional implementation, and more critical in evaluating learning outcomes. This is in line with the findings of Kharlay et al. (2022), who reported that reflective teachers possess stronger metacognitive abilities in assessing instructional effectiveness.

Oktaviani et al. (2022) also emphasized that continuous academic supervision that goes beyond administrative purposes significantly enhances teacher professionalism. Similar results were reported by Wasitoh and Wahyudin (2023), who found that reflective supervision encourages the development of professional attitudes, responsibility, and commitment to improving instructional quality.

Furthermore, the improvement in lesson planning quality observed in this study aligns with the findings of Ridiyawati et al. (2025), who highlighted the effectiveness of reflective supervision based on the cycle of observation–reflection–follow-up in improving teachers’ instructional tools. Faiqoh et al. (2025) likewise demonstrated that supervisor–facilitated reflection contributes to sustained improvements in teachers’ pedagogical competence.

Challenges and Implications of Reflection-Based Academic Supervision

Despite its positive impact, this study also identified several challenges, including the principal’s limited time, teachers’ varying readiness to engage in deep reflection, and constraints in following up on supervision outcomes. These challenges are consistent with the findings of Harris et al. (2019), who noted that principals’ administrative workloads often reduce the effectiveness of their instructional supervision roles.

Additionally, teachers’ perceptions of supervision as an evaluative rather than developmental activity remain a significant challenge. Zepeda (2017) emphasized that shifting the supervision paradigm from control to professional support requires time, a supportive school culture, and principals’ competence in reflective supervision. Therefore, strengthening principals’ capacity as instructional leaders is a critical prerequisite for the successful implementation of reflection-based supervision.

In the context of national policy, the findings of this study are relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum, which positions teachers as lifelong reflective learners (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Nurhadi et al. (2025) further affirmed that academic supervision plays a vital role in creating a work climate that supports teacher professionalism across diverse school contexts.

Synthesis of the Discussion

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that reflection-based academic supervision is an effective approach to enhancing teacher professionalism when implemented in a planned, collaborative, and sustained manner. The findings of this study reinforce previous research emphasizing the importance of reflection, professional dialogue, and follow-up supervision as key elements in improving the quality of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Timperley et al., 2007; Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision at SD Negeri Batusari 5, Mranggen District, Demak Regency, has been carried out in a planned, systematic, and collaborative manner. Academic supervision has not merely functioned as a monitoring activity but has evolved into a process of professional development that emphasizes reflective dialogue between the principal and teachers. The supervision stages comprising planning, classroom observation, joint reflection, and follow-up coaching have been shown to encourage teachers to continuously evaluate and improve their instructional practices.

The reflective process facilitated through academic supervision has made a tangible contribution to enhancing teacher professionalism, particularly in strengthening reflective awareness, pedagogical competence, the quality of instructional planning and implementation, and teachers’ professional attitudes toward feedback and guidance. Teachers have become more open, responsible, and committed to carrying out their professional duties.

Nevertheless, the implementation of reflection-based academic supervision still faces several challenges, including limited time availability for principals and teachers, varying levels of teachers’ readiness to engage in deep self-reflection, the perception of supervision by some teachers as an evaluative activity, and constraints in following up on reflection outcomes. These challenges require serious attention in order to improve the effectiveness of supervision on an ongoing basis.

Therefore, reflection-based academic supervision can serve as an effective leadership strategy for enhancing teacher professionalism when implemented consistently, supported by a reflective school culture, and followed by well-structured follow-up programs. The findings of this study underscore the crucial role of the principal as a facilitator of learning and a developer of teacher professionalism in achieving sustainable educational quality.

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